

storing in the data base one or more records, each of the records comprising data elements defining an identifier of a party and communication information required for communicating with the party through a communication link;

in response to an input from a user, selecting one of a plurality of directories, each of said directories comprising one or more entries and being related to a respective type of communication, each of said entries corresponding to at least one of said data elements of one of said records;

in response to the selecting step, displaying each of the one or more entries of the selected directory;

inputting a search key corresponding to at least a portion of at least one of the displayed entries of the selected directory;

comparing the search key to at least one data element corresponding to at least one of the displayed entries and further displaying those ones of the entries which correspond to data elements corresponding to the search key; and

in response to another input by the user, selecting one of the further displayed entries for initiating a communication to a party, the party being identified by the identifier defined by data elements corresponding to the selected entry.

2. The method as described in claim 1, wherein the step of comparing the search key comprises the steps of:

setting a value of a first variable equal to a number representing a total number of the records to be searched;

setting a value of a second, index variable equal to one;

reading at least one of the data elements of a record corresponding to the value of the second, index variable;

determining whether the search key matches at least one of the data elements of the record corresponding to the value of the second, index variable; and

incrementing the value of the second, index variable by one and subsequently determining whether the value of the second, index variable equals the value of the first variable, and if the value of the second, index variable does not equal the value of the first variable, then the steps of reading, determining, incrementing, and subsequently determining are again performed until it is determined that the value of the second, index variable equals the value of the first variable.

10/3. (Twice amended) A method for operating a personal digital assistant having an input means, a file storage means, a data base, a search engine means, a display means, and an electronic communications means, comprising the steps of:

storing in the data base one or more records, each of the records comprising identification information identifying a party and communication information required for communicating with the party through a communication link;

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in response to an input from a user, selecting one of a plurality of directories, each of said directories comprising one or more entries and being related to a respective type of communication, each of said one or more entries corresponding to a respective one of said records;

inputting a message into the personal digital assistant through the input means; and

in response to a selection by the user, associating the inputted message with a selected [selecting] one of the entries of the selected directory, wherein [for assigning] the communication information of the record corresponding to the selected entry is assigned to the inputted message [,] for subsequently communicating to a party the inputted message using the type of communication corresponding to the selected directory, said party being identified by the identification information of the record corresponding to the selected entry.

4. The method as described in claim 3, wherein a further step is performed of communicating the inputted message to said party identified by the identification information of the record corresponding to the selected entry, said communicating step being performed using the type of communication related to the selected directory.

5. The method as described in claim 4, wherein prior to the step of communicating, a step is performed of storing at least the inputted message, and wherein the step of communicating is performed in response to a user inputting information into the personal digital assistant specifying that the inputted message be communicated.

6. A personal digital assistant device comprising:

a storage means having a data base for storing one or more records, each of the records comprising data elements defining an identifier of a party and communication information required for communicating with the party through an electronic communication link;

a first user input means, said first user input means being operable by a user for inputting a search key corresponding to at least one of the data elements of at least one of said records;

a search engine for comparing at least one of the data elements of at least one of the records to the search key;

a display for displaying at least a portion of those ones of said records having at least one data element corresponding to the search key;

a second user input means, said second user input means being operable by the user for selecting one of the records having at least one data element corresponding to the search key; and

electronic communication means for initiating an electronic communication to the party identified by the identifier defined by data elements of the selected record, using one of a plurality of types of electronic communication.

7. The personal digital assistant device as in Claim 6, wherein at least one of the first and second user input means is comprised of a QWERTY keyboard.

8. The personal digital assistant device as in Claim 6, wherein at least one of the first and second user input means is comprised of a telephone keypad.

9. The personal digital assistant device as in Claim 6, wherein at least one of the first and second user input means is comprised of a user touch-sensitive screen.

10. The personal digital assistant device as in Claim 6, wherein at least one of the first and second user input means is comprised of a voice recognition means.

11. The personal digital assistant device as in Claim 6, wherein the communication information includes at least one of a telephone number, a facsimile number, an E-mail address, a paging address, and an Internet address.

12. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the step of selecting one of the further displayed entries is performed in accordance with the location of an indicator on the display means, denoted by at least one of a cursor, a pointing device or a contact and a selection frame in the display means.

13. A method as described in claim 1, wherein prior to the step of inputting the search key, a step is performed of inputting a message into the personal digital assistant through the input means, and wherein the communication initiated in the step of selecting one of the further displayed entries communicates the inputted message to the party identified by the identifier defined by data elements corresponding to the selected entry.

14. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the communication initiated in the step of selecting one of the further displayed entries is of the type of communication related to the selected directory.

15. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the communication information includes at least one of a telephone number, facsimile number, E-mail address, paging address, and an Internet address.

16. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the respective type of communication includes at least one of a telephony communication, a facsimile communication, an E-mail communication, a paging communication, and an Internet communication.

17. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the plurality of directories include at least two of a telephone number directory, a facsimile number directory, an E-mail address directory, a paging number directory, and an Internet address directory.

18. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the step of further displaying is performed in such a manner that those

ones of the entries which correspond to data elements defining communication information that corresponds to the type of communication related to the selected directory are visually distinguished from those ones of the entries which correspond to data elements defining communication information that is not related to the type of communication related to the selected directory.

19. A method as described in claim 3, wherein the step of selecting one of the entries is performed in accordance with the location of an indicator on the display means, denoted by at least one of a cursor, a pointing device or a contact and a selection frame in the display means.

20. A method as described in claim 3, wherein the communication information includes at least one of a telephone number, facsimile number, E-mail address, paging address, and an Internet address.

21. A method as described in claim 3, wherein the plurality of directories include at least two of a telephone number directory, a facsimile number directory, an E-mail address directory, a paging number directory, and an Internet address directory.

22. A method as described in claim 3, wherein the respective type of communication includes at least one of a telephony communication, a facsimile communication, an E-mail communication, a paging communication, and an Internet communication.

23. A personal digital assistant device as set forth in claim 6, wherein the plurality of types of electronic communication include at least two of a telephony

communication, a facsimile communication, an E-mail communication, a paging communication, and an Internet communication.

24. A personal digital assistant as set forth in claim 6, wherein the communication information includes at least one of a telephone number, facsimile number, E-mail address, paging address, and an Internet address.

25. A personal digital assistant, comprising:

means for storing one or more records, each of the records comprising data elements defining an identifier of a party and communication information required for communicating with the party through a communication link;

communication means;

input means;

a display;

control means coupled to said input means, said display, said communication means, and to said storage means, said control means being responsive to receiving from said input means user-input information specifying that a first one of a plurality of directories be selected for retrieving from said storage means at least a portion of those ones of said records corresponding to said first directory and for controlling the display so as to present the retrieved portions of these records to the user as corresponding directory entries, said control means also being responsive to receiving from

said input means a user-input search key for comparing the user-input search key to at least one of the data elements of at least one of said records from said storage means, for retrieving from said storage means at least a portion of those ones of said records having data elements corresponding to the user-input search key, and for controlling the display so as to display as further directory entries the retrieved portions of said records having data elements corresponding to the user-input search key, said control means also being responsive to receiving from said input means user-input information specifying that one of the further displayed directory entries be selected for controlling said communication means so as to initiate a communication to the party identified by the identifier defined by data elements corresponding to the user-selected directory entry.

26. A personal digital assistant as set forth in claim 25, wherein the communication information includes at least one of a telephone number, facsimile number, E-mail address, paging address, and an Internet address.

27. A method as described in claim 25, wherein the plurality of directories include at least two of a telephone number directory, a facsimile number directory, an E-mail address directory, a paging number directory, and an Internet address directory.

28. A method as described in claim 25, wherein the communications means includes a telephone unit.